

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 00487 160702Z
ACTION EA-09

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PEKING 0487
E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP, CH
SUBJ: CHINA -- POPULATION AND VITAL RATES

REF: STATE 50692

1. SOURCES OF STATEMENT ON GROWTH RATE BEING LESS THAN ONE PERCENT WERE CANADIAN COMMERCIAL OFFICER, WHO NOW IN OTTAWA ON TDY, AND A BRITISH JOURNALIST WHO IS OUT OF CHINA ON VACATION.

2. WE SUSPECT THAT REPORT WAS A GARBLED VERSION OF THAT WHICH APPEARED LATER IN NCNA RELEASE FEBRUARY 27 STATING THAT "CHINA'S RATE OF POPULATION GROWTH HAS GONE DOWN YEAR BY YEAR SINCE 1965 BECAUSE OF THE PROMOTION OF BIRTH CONTROL. IN HOPEI AND KIANGSU PROVINCES THE ANNUAL RATE OF 2.5 PERCENT IN 1965 HAS GONE DOWN TO AROUND ONE PERCENT. IN SHANGHAI AND PEKING, IT IS LESS THAN 0.6 PERCENT." THIS IS MOST RECENT UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

3. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, SO FAR THIS YEAR NO PEKING JOURNALISTS HAVE FILED STORIES ON GROWTH RATES AS LOW ONE PERCENT, AND ALL ARE SKEPTICAL THAT NATIONAL RATE COULD BE SO LOW. THAT REPORTED FOR HOPEI IN PARA 2 MAY HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY THE TANGSHAN EARTHQUAKE DEATH TOLL.

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